

# A Critical Discourse Analysis on Implicit Opinion of Russian Dissatisfaction upon Putin Regime as Expressed in Article “The Civil Archipelago : How Far Can The Resistance To Vladimir Putin Go?”

*Analisis Wacana Kritis terhadap Opini Implisit Tentang Ketidakpuasan Rakyat Rusia pada Regim Putin sebagaimana Diimplisitkan Dalam Artikel “The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can The Resistance To Vladimir Putin Go?”*

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## ABSTRAK

*Penelitian ini membahas opini tersirat tentang ketidakpuasan rakyat Rusia terhadap kepemimpinan Putin sebagaimana diungkapkan dalam artikel berjudul “The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can the Resistance to Vladimir Putin Go?” Artikel ini diterbitkan oleh media massa populer milik Amerika, The New Yorker. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah membuka opini yang tersembunyi sehingga tidak menimbulkan kerancuan dalam memahami pesan dalam kalimat. Pesan yang tersirat tersebut dianalisis menggunakan teori Implikatur Konvensional oleh Potts (2005). Alat yang digunakan yaitu Supplementary Relative dan Nominal Appositive. Sementara untuk melihat hubungan antara penyiratan makna dan dampak ideologis media massa, sebuah analisis wacana kritis juga diterapkan. Yaitu dengan mempertimbangkan hubungan sosio-politis antara Rusia dan Amerika.*

**Kata Kunci :** *analisis wacana kritis, implikatur konvensional, supplementary relative, nominal appositive, hubungan sosio-politis Amerika-Rusia*

## ABSTRACT

This research discusses the implicit opinion about Russian people dissatisfaction upon Putin regime as expressed in article The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can the Resistance to Vladimir Putin Go? This article was published by an American popular mass media, The New Yorker. The main goal of this research is to uncover the hidden opinion that it is unable to emerge an ambiguous interpretation. The implicitness is analysed by using Potts's (2005) theory of Conventional Implicature. The domains used are Nominal Appositive and Supplementary Relative. In order to see the relationship between the implication and the ideological effect of mass media, a critical discourse analysis is applied as well. Namely by taking the socio-political relationship of Russia and US into account.

**Keywords:** critical discourse analysis, conventional implicature, supplementary relative, nominal appositive, US-Russia's socio-political relationship

## 1. Introduction

Fairclough and Wodak (2008:6) stated that mass media may have major ideological effect to produce unequal power relation. This production is done through the ways in which they represent things and position people. Based on this statement, this thesis begins with an assumption that the article entitled “The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can the Resistance to Vladimir Putin Go?” serves an unequal coverage of Vladimir Putin's representation. The inequality is conducted by covering Putin's autocracy more

than his democracy, which, in turn, may create hatred among the regular readers. This assumption is also supported by the fact that the readers of the article gave negative comments on Twitter feed upon Putin's leadership ([http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/12/19/111219fa\\_fact\\_remnick?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/12/19/111219fa_fact_remnick?currentPage=all)). Among the 28 comments displayed in the website, none of them proposed an argument againsts the negative representation of Putin's leadership.

The problem is that the opinion of Russian dissatisfaction upon Putin regime is stated implicitly. In order to understand the implicit opinion, a study of implicitness is highly needed. Hence, a Conventional Implicature by Potts (2005) is needed in this research.

Conventional implicature is a study to understand implicitness by deriving its conventional or lexical meaning (Potts, 2005:11). The domains of conventional implicature applied in this thesis are nominal appositive and supplementary relative. They are chosen for they are the proper grammatical tools to express the individuals being discussed in a press reportage (Meyer, 2000:127).

In Potts's terminology, both supplementary relative and nominal appositive are called supplement. Supplement is a non-integrated expression set off by intonation or punctuation presenting supplementary (Huddleston and Pullum, 2007:307). The internal structures of supplement are 'comma', 'anchor' and 'appositive'. Anchor is the syntactic head of phrase. Appositive is intonationally isolated part which is set off by comma.

Due to the appearance of comma, Potts (2005:92) argued that comma plays its significant role in constructing implicitness. Comma tells appositive clause apart from main clause so that they interact independently (Wang et. al., 2005:2). Main clause contributes to the appearance of at-issue meaning. On the other hand, appositive clause creates a conventional implicature meaning.

At-issue is a coverterm for Grice's 'what is said' which means the asserted or lexical meaning of an utterance (Potts, 2005:6). Conventional implicature meaning is Potts's term for Grice's 'unsaid meaning', or in other words, the implicit meaning. The sentence below presents further explanation:

Politicians, who make extravagant promises, aren't trusted.

The clause 'who make extravagant promises' is the appositive clause. 'Politicians' is the anchor. If comma is missing, the clause 'who make extravagant promises' will be called as an adverbial clause modifying the head noun 'politicians'. Thus, there will be only one reading, namely that only the politicians who make extravagant policies who are not trusted.

However, by punctuating a comma, the clause 'who make extravagant promises' is told apart from the main clause, then it becomes an appositive clause. The main clause itself is 'politicians are not trusted'.

Main clause creates the at-issue meaning. Thus, the at-issue or explicit meaning is that politicians are not trusted. On the other hand, by considering the appositive clause, there will be another reading. Namely, the reason why politicians are not trusted is because they make extravagant promises. This reading is not explicitly stated, but it is communicated or implied through the appositive.

Beside creating a shift from at-issue to a conventional implicature content, comma makes a sentence containing appositive clause tends to be speaker-oriented (Potts, 2005:11). Speaker-oriented happens when an utterance expresses the attitude of the speaker upon an event instead of expressing the event itself. The appositive of the sentence exemplified above identifies the speaker's attitude or comment about politicians in general. Namely, that making extravagant promises is a typical habit of politicians in general.

In conclusion, the emergence of appositive leads to an ideological content of a sentence. The ideology belongs to the speaker or the writer. However, the ideology is delivered implicitly. In case of implicitness in mass media, the ideology is kept in implicit since it is supposed to be socially shared (van Dijk, 1988:64). Thereby, the actual understanding of an utterance should not be natural but ideological, namely depends on the ideology of the speaker (van Dijk, 1988:64).

Sentences containing appositive found in article *The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can the Resistance to Vladimir Putin Go?* may also deliver the implicit ideology of David Remnick, the writer. The ideology can be either to raise the salute to Putin or otherwise to drop it. The article was published a year before the Russian presidential election in 2013, an election in which Putin candidated himself as president. In accordance with this, for whatsoever the ideology is, the representation of Putin as implied in the article will give a big influence to people's vote.

Thus, by considering the socio-political relationship between US and Russia, this research aims to uncover the evaluation on Putin's regime as implied in the article. In order to achieve it, four questions are drawn to guide the analysis.

First, it questions how the use of Nominal Appositive and Supplementary Relative imply the opinion of Russian dissatisfaction upon Putin. Second, it seeks for the supplement which is used more frequent. Third, it expels the implicit meaning implied in the article. Fourth, having been answered the preceding three questions, it serves a suggestion of how the article should be read.

## 2. Research Methodology

This research uses a mixed research type of qualitative and quantitative. It is a qualitative since it aims to interpret and describe the hidden opinion implied in the article. It constitutes a quantitative for it deals with calculating which supplement is mostly used. Documentary research is applied since the data is taken from written source, namely from an online mass media *thenewyorker.com*.

The data is processed based on the two domains used in this research, namely Nominal Appositive and Supplementary Relative. Thus, what considered to be the data is only the sentences in the article that contains either or both Nominal Appositive and Supplementary Relative.

The analysis of the data aims to expel the implicit meaning. The appearance of the implicit meaning is triggered by the interaction of appositive clause and main clause. Thus, the analysis is firstly done by relating the main clause to the appositive clause.

The analysis also identifies whether Supplementary Relative or Nominal Appositive is used more frequent. The different use of either Supplementary Relative or Nominal Appositive will differ the meaning as well. Hence, in order to make the difference clearer, a sentence containing a Nominal Appositive is tested by replacing with Supplementary Relative, and vice versa.

## 3. Result

The result shows that it is Supplementary Relative and Nominal Appositive that makes the opinion of Russian dissatisfaction upon Putin implicit. The implication is created by punctuating a comma that separates the appositive clause from the main clause. By the emergence of comma, there are two kinds of meanings that can be derived. First, at-issue or natural meaning which is derived from the main

clause. Second, the conventional implicature which is derived from the appositive clause.

Syntactically, the difference between Nominal Appositive and Supplementary Relative lies on the *wh*-pronoun of the appositive clause. Semantically, they differ in the scope of meaning. Nominal Appositive serves a narrower scope than Supplementary Relative. A wide scope interpretation enables to add a local context to the reading of a sentence (Carston, 2005:42). In terms of supplement, wide scope reading gives other possible informations about the anchor. Otherwise, a narrow scope reading closes other possibilities. Consequently, the implication is delivered more fierce and clearer.

Nominal Appositive is found more frequently used than Supplementary Relative. The result of data processing shows that Nominal Appositive is used 22 times but Supplementary Relative is used 12 times only. That means David Remnick, the writer of the article, intends to deliver the idea that Putin's regime is disappointing to the readers in such a clear way.

## 4. Discussion

The article *The Civil Archipelago: How Far Can the Resistance to Vladimir Putin Go?* represents the inequality to Putin both by evaluating Putin's leadership or by reporting the opponents to Putin. One of the evaluation of Putin's leadership can be identified in how it describes Kozlov's case. Sentences below explains more about Kozlov.

Romanova's husband, Alexei Kozlov, a developer in his thirties, was arrested three years ago ... In a remarkable article published this year in *Novaya Gazeta*, Romanova said that the source of her husband's troubles was likely a critical story she did for the Russian magazine *The New Times* about one of Moscow's oligarchs. Kozlov's business partner was a former senator named Vladimir Slutzker, who knew the oligarch.

From the sentences above, it is known that Kozlov's arrest is likely connected to his wife's critical writing about one of Moscow's oligarchs. Thus, in the clause 'who knew the oligarch' does not mean all of the oligarchs, but only the one who had been the subject of Romanova's critical story. The appositive also wrote 'knew' implying

that Slutzker has a close relationship with the said oligarch. Besides, the main clause stated that Slutzker built a relationship too with Kozlov, by being his 'business partner'. Thus, if the appositive is connected to the main clause, it implies that Kozlov built any relationship with the oligarch as well. By the help of the two preceding sentences above, it can be inferred that such relationship is the detention of Kozlov.

In other words, the appositive of the sentence implies that the very oligarch, namely the oligarch in Kozlov's wife critical writing, must be the one who bears the responsibility of Kozlov's detention.

Meanwhile, oligarch in Russia means a bunch of extremely rich people having privilege access to official bureaucracy. Putin, before rising to his presidency for the first time, was one of the oligarchs. The implication of one certain oligarch's involvement in a civilian's arrest will automatically influence the readers about the badness of the oligarchs. Namely, that they have easier access to bureaucracy than they utilize it for their own sake. As Putin was once involved in such group, the badness of oligarchy group leads to a bad image upon Putin too.

The implicitness of the sentence above is delivered through a Supplementary Relative. The reading will be slightly different when it is replaced by a nominal appositive. To test the difference, the sentence is modified as follow:

Kozlov's business partner was a former senator named Vladimir Slutzker, a friend of the oligarch.

When the appositive remains to be 'who knew the oligarch', it opens other possibilities that the anchor, namely Slutzker may not have any relationship with the oligarch. However, by replacing it to be 'a friend of the oligarch' the reading is only one. Namely that Slutzker is obviously an acquaintance of the oligarch. In other words, by placing a Nominal Appositive, rather than a Supplementary Relative, the oligarch's connection with Kozlov's arrest is delivered clearer.

A nominal appositive is also used to represent Putin's ideology about a 'managed democracy' which is expressed in sentence below:

Surkov, in numerous speeches, has promoted what he calls "sovereign" or "managed" democracy, a postmodern system that includes elements of autocracy, democracy, and sheer brutality.

Vladislav Yuryevich Surkov is a Russian politician. At the time the article was published, he was charged as First Deputy of Chief of Presidential Administration. He was also known as the Kremlin main ideologist, which means that the policies conducted by federal government is mainly based upon Surkov's advice. Thereby it implies that Surkov is one of Putin's loyalist.

As a loyalist, it means that every word coming out from his speeches is meant to support Putin's policies and ideology. Thus, the at-issue meaning as depicted in the main clause implies that the "managed" democracy promoted by Surkov is the style of governmental system conducted by Putin.

Meanwhile, in the appositive of the sentence Remnick implies his attitude towards the system, namely that the system includes elements of autocracy, democracy and sheer brutality. Both dictions 'autocracy' and 'sheer brutality' imply bad impression. It, thus, implies that managed democracy is not a system worth living since it brings Russia to an autocratic and brutal country.

In other word, it implicitly says that the system promoted by Putin must not be conducted. This implicit expression about Putin's weaknesses would bring reader's hesitancy to Putin as well.

The implicit evaluation is delivered in a clear way, since it uses a Nominal Appositive. When the sentence uses a Supplementary Relative, the implication is expressed smoothly. The modified sentence below aims to show the difference:

Surkov, in numerous speeches, has promoted what he calls "sovereign" or "managed" democracy, which is a postmodern system that includes elements of autocracy, democracy, and sheer brutality.

The wh-pronoun in 'which is a postmodern system that includes elements of autocracy, democracy, and sheer brutality' opens other possibilities that managed democracy sometimes does offer a true democracy and not

an autocratic one. Otherwise, by placing a nominal appositive, there is no other possibilities. Namely, that managed democracy offers an autocratic system all the way. That means nominal appositive expresses a bad evaluation of Putin's governmental system in a firm way.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

The discussion on the use of supplement and the different reading between Supplementary Relative and Nominal Appositive concludes that: first, comma plays its important role in creating the implicitness, namely by separating the appositive clause and the main clause. Second, the use of nominal appositive makes the implication more critical and firm.

Considering that Potts has stated that appositive tends to make the sentence a speaker-oriented, the implicit evaluation upon Putin's leadership may become an evaluation of the writer himself. Besides, the relationship between US and Russia is now getting worse. Thus, the readers should be more careful and critical in receiving the message.

Due to a notice to the appearance of comma, this research is conducted in field of semantics. Though this research is not the first analysis on semantic-based implicature, there remains researches on such matters untested yet. This research only focuses on two domains of conventional implicature. They are supplementary relative and nominal appositive. Potts himself proposed other domains excluded in this research. Thus, there is still a gap in treating the same theory but with different domain.

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